

Drinking Water Program Transition
Operator Certification – Frequently Asked Questions
(As of May 19, 2014)

1. When will the Drinking Water Program move to the Water Control Board?

The Administration proposed to transfer the Drinking Water program to the State Water Board through the budget process. If approved by the Legislature, this transition will be effective July 1, 2014 or upon budget approval, whichever is later.

2. How can I receive updates on the pending legislation?

Please refer to www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinkingwater for news on the pending legislation.

3. What will change?

Subject to approval of the DWP transfer by the Legislature, the Drinking Water Operator Certification Program (Op Cert) will physically relocate to the CalEPA building, where the State Water Board is located. This is expected to happen in the fall/winter of 2014. Email addresses of Op Cert staff will change. Certificates and ID cards issued after the transfer will change. To stay updated on the transfer please refer to www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinkingwater

4. Will I work with the same staff?

Yes you will work with the same program staff.

5. Will I need to call a different phone number?

The contact phone numbers will remain the same.

6. What will be the physical location of the Operator Certification Program?

Subject to approval of the DWP transfer by the Legislature, the Op Cert program will remain at its current physical location: 1616 Capitol Avenue, Suite 74.250, Sacramento, California, 95814. In late fall/winter of 2014, the program will relocate to the CalEPA building located at 1001 I St. Sacramento, California 95814. Please refer to the program website for updates at: www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/occupations/Pages/DWopcert.aspx

7. Where should I mail the application/renewal fee?

Continue to use the existing mailing address which is:
Operator Certification Program (OpCert)
Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management
P.O. Box 997377, MS 7417
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Please refer to the program website for updates at:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/occupations/Pages/DWopcert.aspx>

8. Will the fees increase?

Fees are based on the program covering its costs. We do not anticipate any fee increase as a result of the transfer.

9. How are the fees set?

Fees are set in regulation. If any changes were to be made to the fee structure they would go through the public participation and rulemaking process.

10. Who will I make my check payable to?

Subject to approval of the DWP transfer by the Legislature, checks will be made payable to State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board). There will be some transition period during which checks may be made payable to either the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) or State Water Board.

11. Will the regulations change?

CDPH has been looking at updating the Drinking Water Operator Certification regulations. If the regulations are changed, it will not be a result of the transition.

12. Will my current CDPH issued certifications remain valid?

Yes, currently issued certificates will remain valid until their expiration date.

13. Will I be sent new certification issued by SWRCB?

Not at this time. Your existing certificate will remain valid until the expiration date. Upon expiration of your certificate; a renewal ID card will be issued from the State Water Board.

14. Will the frequency of my renewal change?

No. For the time being the frequency of the drinking water renewal will remain the same. Any amendments to the current renewal procedures must go through the regulatory process for approval.

15. Will the examination dates (for drinking water) remain the same as listed on the CDPH internet?

The examination dates for the time period of July 2014 through June 2015 will remain the same. The program has not identified exam dates post June, 2015.

16. Will I be able to take a drinking water exam at a clean water session?

At this time, the clean water and drinking water exams will remain separate. However, the program is considering offering the exams together in the future.

17. For drinking water examinations, will all Grade Levels continue to have the same amount of time to complete the exam?

All Grade Levels will continue to have the same amount of time to complete the exam. Treatment Grade 5 will remain an oral exam for the foreseeable future.

18. Will there be a recycled water certification?

The Operator Certification Program is assessing whether to offer a recycled water certification in the future. This would require statutory amendments as well as changes to the regulations.

19. Will there be a dual certification fee reduction for being a Waste Water and Drinking Water operator?

The Operator Certification Program is assessing the possibility of a dual certification. This would require both statutory and regulatory amendments.

20. Will the wastewater certificate require continuing education contact hours for renewal?

The Operator Certification Program is assessing whether continuing education contact hours should become a requirement for wastewater certification. Any amendments to the current certification procedures must go through the regulatory process for approval.

21. Will the exam content change?

CDPH has an ongoing validation process to ensure that exam questions are representative of operator duties and responsibilities. Questions may change because of this process. Changes to the exam questions are not a result of the transfer.

22. Will there be essay questions on the Water Treatment and Distribution exams in the future?

There is no proposal to change the existing exam format.

23. Will the website change?

Yes, the Op Cert program is working on making the website more user-friendly.

24. Will enforcement action for drinking water operators change?

At this time, CDPH District Office and the Local Primacy Agencies will continue to enforce operator certification requirements for public water systems. Certified operators continue to have the same responsibilities and must maintain the appropriate level of certification.

25. How can I keep up to date on information with the transition and future program updates?

For current information on the transition please check www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinkingwater

The State Water Boards uses electronic subscription mailing lists that are available on its website. Subject to approval of the DWP transfer by the Legislature, a subscription for drinking water operators will be created. Operators will be able to subscribe to the list, as changes are announced they will be automatically notified.

26. Will the wastewater exams and certificate process change?

At this time there are no changes to the wastewater exam and certification process. You may keep updated on changes by accessing the website at www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification